Essay on the Common Law of Ruanda

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Preface

101 563 Beyond the eastern shore of Lake Kivu extends a country of high hills called Ruanda. Nestling in banana groves, innumerable huts cling to the hillside, their smoke rising to the sky, and on the summits the brisk wind sways the pink grasses of the pastures where long-horned cattle graze. The exceptionally dense population con- [161] sists of about 3,000,000 Bahutu of Bantu origin who are dominated by some tens of thousands of Batutsi, Hamitic shepherds who have probably come down from the Ethiopian plateaus. Finally, here and there, Batwa pygmoids, potters and hunters, live apart from the other natives who despise them.

183 671 Europeans who first studied the customs of the country discovered to their surprise that they showed a number of points in common with our feudalism. The tenure of land and of cattle as well as [643] the dependence of persons are under a [4] strict regulation which the ruler of Ruanda has the absolute power to modify but which has, in fact, remained unchanged throughout the ages.

177 183 Our occupation has obviously had the effect of modifying the customs in many ways. For example, we could not approve of the brutal evictions and attempts on life and liberty made in the name of the right of the strongest. Evangelization has also introduced into the heart of the native society notions of justice and gentleness which are very different from the natives' original conceptions. However, despite 177 the efforts of our civil servants and our missionaries to attack what is 183 most to be condemned in it, native customs still largely holds its 563 sway due to the influence of the great Batutsi chiefs, who are eager to maintain their authority intact, and also due to that of the sorcerers, toothsayers, rain makers, and many others, who attempt to maintain the traditional law by playing on the credulity and superstitious mind of the Banyarwanda [Banyaruanda] and thus protect their prestige and their revenues. In addition, while realizing the protection we give them in repressing arbitrary actions, the Bahutu submit to the changes we

177 have brought to their customs rather than truly adhere to them. This
183 passive attitude is due to an inveterate fatalism which makes them
563 bow before the undisputed master, the Mututsi, and also to the antiquity of custom which makes it as respectable as an almost divine institution.

671 As is the case in the Belgian Congo and generally in [5] Black Africa, the common law contains not only juridical rules applicable to persons, property, and society, it also contains religious and magic regulations, various recipes, etc. Such as it is, it forms a disparate yet solid whole which gives the solution to problems arising from the individual and collective life of the Banyarwanda.

671 The common law of Ruanda, applicable to a homogeneous
184 population, is the same everywhere, except in the north on the
563 frontier of Kivu and Uganda, where the authority of the Batutsi over the Bahutu could not assert itself as in the rest of the country. This independence has resulted in the substitution of the administration of the Bahutu clan and family chiefs for that of the Hamite officials.

114 Those who have known Ruanda and its people best are the members of the Society of Missionary Fathers of Africa. The Reverend Fathers Lupias, Schumacher, Arnoux, Pagès, and Hurel have published, in the Anthropos and Congo reviews (among others) and in numerous monographs, elaborate studies on different aspects of the social, political, religious, and intellectual life of the Banyarwanda. The territorial governors Lenaerts and Sandrart have also brought fruitful contributions to the knowledge of Ruanda common law.

121 Nevertheless, we do not believe that a more or less complete account of the customs of private and public law of Ruanda has ever been prepared. This is what we have modestly attempted to do in the [125] present work by inserting observations gathered in a questionnaire set up especially to facilitate [6] the study of native law (1). We have

1. J. Vanhove, Questionnaire de Sociologie juridique, Brussels, printer Lesigne, 1939.

not been able to go into the details of all the institutions of which some, particularly those relative to cattle contracts, would alone require a whole volume.

124 But, in spite of the limited time we could devote to this account of the customs, we believe we have given the essential points

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi FO42

181 *mugabo* (a rich man) and a *mukungu*—a very rich man possessing a few
564 cows, many fields, goats, and bee-hives. He enjoys the recognition of his
554 fidelity to his master and his qualities as a labourer.

The Batwa never had the stability of peasants. They were hunters, potters, dancers, buffoons, and were regarded by their neighbours as being on the margin of society. They did not possess anything that others could envy. Consequently security from exactions was not such an important value for them. As people who lived a hazardous and unsettled existence, they greatly appreciated momentary and immediate satisfactions, and among these, food, especially during periods of scarcity, was the object of their activity. Their principal means of securing food varied according to their particular occupations. Hunters depended on their ability and their courage, of which they were very proud. Dancers, musicians, and buffoons relied on their talents and on the favour of their masters, their loyalty to whom was widely recognized. Indeed it is said that one could rely upon a Mutwa much more than on anybody else.

The social and economic situation of the Batwa explains and to some extent determines the value they attach to gratifying the basic need for food. Ability in their specialized occupations and a blind faithfulness to their masters were the best means to achieve that satisfaction, but skills and loyalty were also valued for themselves.

Rules of Human Action

517 These values, ultimate and intermediate, were eagerly sought by Banyar-
● 183 wanda but, as in any society, some means for realizing them were prohibited under certain circumstances. Stealing is rarely, if ever, culturally accepted as an ordinary practice for getting rich. Socially defined values are to be reached by socially approved means. We do not suggest that, in a particular society, the rules of action appear as merely social imperatives, or that the only basis for these rules is social. We would point out that some rules of action, whatever their origin and their philosophical foundation, are part of the collective heritage in any society. In Ruanda, as elsewhere, there are such rules of action. Murdering somebody who is not an enemy of one's family is prohibited. Women are forbidden to commit adultery and, among Batutsi and Bahutu, unmarried girls may not have sexual intercourse. When an order is issued by somebody in authority it has to be obeyed.

517 Does submission to the rules appear only as the rational behaviour of one
626 who wishes to avoid an external punishment or is it moral conduct? Does a prospective offender refrain from wrong-doing simply in order to avoid very probable and unpleasant consequences, or is it his conscience which tells him that he should not follow his desire?

Of course this is not an either-or problem, but the question of degree or relative stress is important. Even in cultures which lay most stress on the moral motivation to action, external social sanctions are useful deterrents from prohibited behaviour. In Ruanda these external sanctions exist. Those

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qualification for the happy one is not to live a blameless life on earth, but to undergo initiation into the *Ryangombe* cult.

Thus the ethics of the Banyarwanda are not integrated on a religious basis such as the will of God. What is the principle of integration, or rather, we should first ask, are their ethical conceptions integrated? On the surface they consist, like any moral code, of a multiplicity of prohibitions, orders, and exhortations. Have they achieved a synthesis of these separate elements by reducing the multiplicity to one or a few principles? Or, what amounts to the same thing, could they give a definition of good and evil?

In Ruanda a great number of particular rules are subsumed under general principles such as: do not do what is harmful to people of your group or of your country; do what people related to you would like; submit to your superiors. Principles such as these are already on a higher level of abstraction than the particular rules. When informants are asked to account for a given rule or principle they give as the final justification: 'It has always been done that way in Ruanda.' We may perhaps express the Ruanda definition of good and evil in these terms: That is good (or evil) which tradition has defined as good (or evil).

Tradition is indeed a powerful force in cultures which, as in Ruanda, have been isolated for centuries from world currents. Each generation is more conscious of the importance of what it has received from the preceding one than is possible when much of what constitutes its way of life comes not from its ancestors but from some other social tradition. Moreover, their relations with their neighbours whom they frequently subjugated have persuaded Banyarwanda of the excellence of the ways of life transmitted by their forefathers. In such a situation the traditional character of a rule appears to be sufficient justification. If the ancestors, who were so wise, behaved in that way it would be preposterous to question it.

But it would be misleading to picture the Banyarwanda as following blindly the moral rules framed in a remote past without having any idea of their purpose. Some old men have a clear understanding of the social significance of certain rules. They explained, for example, that the duality of the rules concerning adultery committed by the husband or by the wife was accounted for by the importance of the wife's function in procreation. She has thus a greater responsibility than the husband for maintaining the integrity of the family.

Does this kind of thinking extend so far as independence of tradition? Some informants told us that, apart from the authority of custom, some actions were thought of as dishonourable in themselves. But these informants were Christians and, apparently, very much influenced by their religion. Moreover, they could not quote a clear case of conflict between tradition and ethics.

No moral code can achieve an absolute character in all its precepts. Prohibitions and commands frequently relate only to certain categories of persons and situations. Even the Christian Western ethic, which realizes to

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi FO42

a very considerable extent universality and absoluteness, qualifies some of its commands. The degree of absoluteness and universality of the Ruanda rules of conduct is much lower. We might say that most of its precepts are qualified in relation to persons and circumstances. To steal cattle was forbidden, but a Mututsi could take the cattle of a Muhutu who had no lord. For a Muhutu to rob a foreigner was not forbidden. A wife might not commit adultery, but she was allowed to have sexual relations with people when ordered by her husband to do so and, even without her husband's permission, a woman could have intercourse with her husband's brothers and parallel cousins. Killing a man was prohibited, but not if he was an enemy of Ruanda or of the family, and if the feud had not been barred by the king. Banyarwanda certainly had no idea of rules of behaviour applicable to all men in virtue of their common humanity. This is perfectly consistent with the Ruanda conception of mankind and the very significant inequalities which Banyarwanda observe between themselves and neighbouring peoples and, among themselves, between the different castes.

To conclude, the rules of human action which prohibit or enjoin the use of certain means in order to achieve the culturally recognized values of Ruanda are sanctioned, not only by organized and unorganized social reactions but also by individual conscience or guilt feelings. The foundation of this moral code is not religious or supernatural but traditional; its content is a multiplicity of rules synthesized under a few moral principles. Particular precepts do not have a universal application but are relative to persons and groups.

Human Relations

Two principles dominate the field of human relations in Ruanda: inequality of men and indefinite reciprocity.

For the Banyarwanda all men have indeed a common nature; they are ultimately the descendants of the same ancestor. But this notion does not seem to be very significant, for Banyarwanda are much more impressed by the differences displayed by the various castes. The characteristics of these castes are stereotyped and repeated in many folk-tales. Batutsi are intelligent (in the sense of astute in political intrigues), apt to command, refined, courageous, and cruel. Bahutu are hard-working, not very clever, extrovert, irascible, unmannerly, obedient, physically strong. Batwa are gluttonous, loyal to their Batutsi masters, lazy, courageous when hunting, lacking in restraint. These characteristics, with differences in stress and shading, are generally recognized by all Banyarwanda. As they reflect the Mututsi point of view, it appears that the superior caste has been able to make other people see themselves in important respects as Batutsi see them. Moreover, those qualities are considered to be innate, not acquired. A Mututsi is born clever and a Muhutu impulsive. Some tales, more widely known than those concerning the creation of man, relate how the first Batutsi came to Ruanda

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Boys from Twelve To

883 fifteen were in charge of cattle herds and were absent for several
[224] days and nights from the compound. They also hunted with their fathers.

Even before puberty, some socialization processes took place
869 outside of the nuclear or polygamous family. Mythological tales about the material world, the origin of man and animal species, the arrival of the Tutsi in Ruanda, beliefs concerning *Imana*, the spirits of the dead and other beings from the invisible world, the history of the kings of Ruanda, of the military conquests, folk-lore and poems about cattle, and stories of the ancestors and the lineage
[603] heroes were transmitted to the younger generation by the grand-
867 father. He was also the main agent of education in the modes of behaviour indicating what was to be done and what was to be avoided in order to gain social approval.

882 Between puberty and marriage the further education of Tutsi boys took place at the court of a chief or of the king. Hutu stayed
[868] in the paternal compound, mastering the different techniques of
[867] cultivation and also the attitude and abilities necessary for them to be appreciated by the lord. Sometimes the young man replaced his father in the service of the lord.

595 What has been said in this section up to now applied equally to each compound of the polygynous family. Children of different wives were not brought up together. In each compound the mother had a role very similar to that of the mother in a nuclear family. There was no head-wife. Usually one was preferred by the husband (*inkundwakazi*, the favourite one), but because of her qualities (obedience, tidiness, beauty, &c.), and not because she
[428] was the first married. But the fact that the eldest son of the first wife often succeeded to the father, gave her a particular importance and respect by the others because, after the husband's death, all of them would probably be dependent on her eldest son.

595 The mutual behaviour of wives and their children has been
593 mentioned before. It may be summarized as: respect to the favour-
183 ite wife and the first wife, and good 'fraternal' relations between all the wives and the children. This was the ideal behaviour which was often overtly maintained as long as the husband was living. But
[152] according to all our informants, the modal and covert behaviour was jealousy and hatred. A polygynous family was often designated by the word *amshali*, whose root *ishyali* means jealousy, and one wife used to refer to another as her *mukeba*, rival. In these

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not injure the living. Consequently the cult addressed to the *bazimu* (spirits of the dead) was essentially aimed at appeasing them. When an unfortunate event was ascribed to a dead relative's ire by the diviner, the spirit had to be placated by the immolation of a goat or even a bull.

These practices were symbolic. It was not implied that the *bazimu* really drank the milk, ate the meat, or slept with the girl. When a goat or a steer was offered, most of it was eaten by members of the family. Other practices are more difficult to interpret. It sometimes happened that water was given to the spirits and at the same time they were told very loudly that it was milk. The explanation given by most informants is that *bazimu* were regarded as rather stupid and that these mock offerings were not given to the ancestors who were respected but only to the collaterals who, as *bazimu*, were hated. To have feared powerful *bazimu*, however, and at the same time to have deceived them so grossly does not appear very coherent and requires, I think, further explanation.

Every fourth reign, there was an important ritual connected with the final burial of the fourth predecessor of the king. As all *bazimu* were thought to accompany the spirit of the king long ago deceased, their cult was abolished. The inzu heads, however, continued to be remembered.[13]

[13] Kagame, 1947, pp. 377-86.

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(*d*) *Intergroup political relations*

121 Intergroup political relations are essentially different. They do not imply inferiority and superiority. The opposite assumption is made: the two groups are supposed to be independent and equal. If by diplomacy or by war one succeeds in subduing the other, the subsequent unequal relations will be more similar to intragroup than to intergroup political relations.

If our definition of intragroup political organization be accepted, the word 'political' when applied to intergroup relations conveys a different and derivative meaning. Those who control legitimate coercion within a social structure are also those who are qualified to enter into intergroup relations. Subjects do not represent their own group, only rulers do. The ability to deal with intergroup relations results from a superior situation in internal political relations. In that sense, the political external relations may be said to be secondary. In the following account of Ruanda political organization the emphasis will be on the primary political relations, the internal ones.

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642 571 In Ruanda, there were two types of relationships sanctioned by legitimate coercion on the part of the superior. Consequently we may distinguish within the political organization two structures which may be termed administrative and military. Another system of social relations was the clientage structure or the feudal organization. It occupied an intermediate position between the political and the private spheres. It was not purely political, but it was much more than a private agreement such as a loan. Consequently the feudal relations in Ruanda will be considered in close connexion with the administrative and military ones.

[183] 641 The three structures were interwoven and interconnected at each level. This was particularly the case at the top and at the bottom. The mwami held the supreme position in the three systems and the commoners were taxpayers, members of an army, and clients. In the intermediate levels it happened, too, that a superior and an inferior were linked by several ties: one could be at the same time the lord and the cattle-chief of an individual, and the client of one's army chief.

I shall describe and analyse each structure separately.

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To provide the central government with regular revenues, to maintain its predominant and privileged situation, and to favour social cohesion, were the functions of the administrative structure. Moreover, as any authority in Ruanda, the land-chief was judge in the disputes concerning rights over land. The cattle-chief, however, had no judicial capacity because disputes about cattle were dealt with by the army-chief.

Impositions and taxes exist in all societies which have a centralized organization of political power. Rulers to maintain their dominant position need to be able to dispose of great revenues. The more centralized a government is, the larger is the amount of goods needed because the administrative officers are numerous.[13]

This political necessity of taxation has been justified differently according to the ideology of each culture.[14] Thus in modern democratic states, taxes are said to be the contribution of each citizen to the maintenance of services used by all members of the community, such as roads open to everybody, a police force which protects property and life against internal dangers, courts and tribunals for those who feel that they have been wronged and want to obtain reparation, an army which protects the community against an external threat, &c.

In Ruanda, tributes in labour and goods to the mwami were justified by the nature of the royal power. Kingship was divine. The first king of Ruanda, Nkuba (which means lightning), lived in heaven with his wife Nyagasani, their two sons Kigwa and Mututsi, and their daughter, Nyampundu. One day the three siblings fell from heaven and settled on a Ruanda hill. There Kigwa married his sister. Their descendents constituted the Abanyiginya clan. Mututsi, Kigwa's brother, married one of his nieces. Their descendents were the Abega. The two royal clans (usually the Abanyiginya married Abega girls) had thus a divine origin.[15] From this godlike nature of the mwami followed the justification of his absolute power and of the sovereignty of his rights over the people, the cattle, and the land of Ruanda. By virtue of that divine sovereignty, the king could require tribute. Because everything and everybody was his, he could confiscate any cattle or agricultural produce, and take the labour or even the life of anybody.

This was the theory. In fact the mwami did not use his prerogatives more than the rulers who were not divine but had the same means

[13] Maquet, 1952. [14] Maquet, 1954c, p. 65. [15] See Pagès, 1933, p. 491.

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of coercion at their disposal. If a mwami attempted to go beyond his effective power even without exceeding the limits of his divine rights, he exposed himself to the chance of meeting some obstacles. Nevertheless, he had sovereign as well as divine rights and his subjects were constantly reminded of these by the tributes they had to pay.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE MILITARY STRUCTURE

Every Ruanda, Twa, Hutu as well as Tutsi, was affiliated to an army (*ingabo*). This is stated by ninety-nine per cent. of our informants. Although this military organization is obsolete at the present day—indeed it no longer exists—ninety-eight per cent. of the Tutsi interviewed can still give the name of the army of their paternal ascendants.

There were several armies. The name of each one had a military meaning. It was a challenge, a boast, the memory of a dynastic or historical event: for instance 'the tough ones' (*abashakamba*), 'the first to be praised' (*imbanzamihigo*), 'the fearless ones' (*inzirabwoba*), &c. At the beginning of each reign a new army was organized by the king. Moreover, a very important chief could be authorized by the mwami to raise an army.

(*a*) *Recruitment*

An army was recruited in the following way. The mwami asked his Tutsi clients to bring to the court their sons who had not yet had any military training. When about 150 to 200 young men were gathered, they constituted what we may call a company (*itorero*). During the reign, four or five companies were recruited in the same way and were added to the first one. According to ninety-six per cent. of our informants a man had to stay all his life in the company he had first entered. The young men (*intore*, the chosen ones) lived at the court of the king or of the chief who had been allowed to recruit an army. Under the direction of an officer called the chief of the king's residence (*umutware w'urugo rw'umwami*) or of its counterpart at a chief's court, they were trained for several years in military skills such as bow and arrow shooting, the use of the sword, spear, and javelin. They learned warlike dances, and to memorize and to recite the poems in which the high deeds of extraordinary bravery and boldness of the past warriors were exalted.[16] They were also taught how to compose

[16] See Kagame, 1949b; 1951.

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WOMEN OF BURUNDI: A STUDY OF SOCIAL VALUES*†

Ethel M. Albert

SUCCESS IN REALIZING the central values of Rundi society is, for men and women alike, dependent on inherited caste position, intelligence and "luck".[1] In this feudal, patriarchal society, the central values are political power and authority; wealth—especially cows and lands and, today, money and the goods and services it can purchase; respect and love from one's dependants; and elegance of appearance, manners and material possessions. What is needed before all else for obtaining the good things of life, the Rundi say, is the favour of *Imana*, the Supreme Being or Providence. Divine favour is also requisite to the realization of such other important values as numerous children, protection against one's many enemies, and the retention of goods already obtained. The chief terrestrial asset for realizing values is position in the social hierarchy.[2] The likelihood of happiness is greatest for the *mwami*, the king, and for the men and women of the royal and princely patrilineages. Opportunity and hope diminish progressively with decreasing status in the hierarchy, through the patrilineages of the Tutsi herders, the Hutu farmers and serfs, and, at the bottom, the Twa, potters and pariahs.

Women, in so markedly patriarchal and patrilineal a society as

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ever she does, she does within the limits of her various feminine roles. However, the obligations of motherhood, of the household and of wifehood hardly prevent a woman from participating in other activities. Indeed, in Burundi, everyone is busy with politics —the large scale politics of the kingdom for the *abakuru*, the great ones, and the petty politics of daily life for the *abatoyi*, the humble folk. Women are not less interested in it than men, nor peasants less than princes. A peasant widow plays politics to obtain a length of cotton cloth or to protect against her enemies her rights to her little plot of cultivable land. A princess plays politics to obtain jewellery and cows and to decide a princely succession. A woman is sometimes driven by ambition for the sake of her son; sometimes it is to her advantage to help her husband; sometimes she enters the game entirely in her own interest. Peasant or princess, if a Rundikazi understands and desires happiness, if she knows how to dominate men in all subtlety, if she is clever and courageous, she may even defeat her own father or husband in the political game. The ambition of a Rundi or Rundikazi of inferior birth is seriously limited by the restrictive rules of the caste system. However, the ambition of a woman as such encounters only the sometimes purely apparent obstacle of a patriarchal, patrilineal system in which all the legitimate titles to wealth and power are for men.[4] Women who are ambitious and intelligent do not seem to be at a disadvantage in having to function in politics by indirect means and in secret. These are, in any case, the preferred methods of men in the delicate business of increasing power and wealth.

Thus, in Burundi as elsewhere, one finds charming but formidable matriarchs who have considerable authority and who are perhaps more intimidating than the harshest of patriarchs. On the other hand, most of the women of Burundi never even approach realization of the central values of the society. They must work to the limit of their strength so that they will not die of hunger. This is because most Rundi are of the inferior castes, where men and women share the wretchedness of the poor. It would be vain to try to calculate the difference between the misery of a man and that of a woman, if both of them are of inferior birth, without relatives or a feudal protector, old, weak and not very bright.

Neither a Rundikazi who wields great political influence nor a man of low caste who has more political power and wealth than his social superior is regarded as an outlaw. On the contrary, they are looked upon as clever and lucky. The social structure of Burundi, like that of other societies, does not describe behaviour. It only serves as a guide. A society would be crushed by the weight of

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its own rules, if each infraction were punished strictly according to prescribed sanctions and if all the formal norms were always respected. To be a part of a society is to know which of its rules prescribe or prohibit absolutely or conditionally; whether a particular action which is not forbidden is nevertheless something that is simply "not done"; whether human beings, always imperfect, must in any particular case actually be punished or whether the offence should blinked. Exceptions to the formal rules are not haphazard. Rather, they are ordered by what may be called implicit norms, or secondary or functional norms. These are as well known and as well established as norms which are explicit and formal. Taken together, the explicit, primary norms and the implicit, secondary norms form the "active norms" of the society. By means of secondary norms, society can come to terms with the social and psychological impossibility of a perfect correspondence between the formal norms of the social structure, invented by men in the interest of social order, and the actions of men confronted by the empirical realities of human existence.

Each society has its own calculus of values by which it establishes its active norms, the norms to be respected verbally but understood to be neither practical nor practised, and the rules of punishment which are to be taken seriously. It will not be possible to understand the life of the women of Burundi without knowing both the formal norms of the social structure and the secondary, functional norms. The life of a Rundikazi is made up of various elements. To reconstruct it, we shall begin with a description of women as members of Rundi society, of which they form an integral part. We shall then describe women in the specifically feminine roles, and we shall conclude with an account of the devices used by women to realize the values of their patriarchal society.

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The Rundi describe their society as a hierarchy ordered by *Imana*, the Supreme Being, who is at its summit. Among human beings, it is the *mwami*, the king, who is superior to all. In the past, there was also Kiranga, the legendary head of a possession cult. He was said to be of approximately the same rank as the *mwami*.[5] Immediately below the king are the *baganwa*, the princes—four generations of the descendents of a king. The *mwami* and the *baganwa* are the rulers of the Rundi. In the traditional system, the power of the *mwami* was defined by his inheritence of absolute royal power and of the entire country, together with all its goods,

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592 593 428 [591] sons as his heritor. The mother chooses one of her daughters as her heritor, to whom she will leave her clothing, her baskets and her pot of perfumed butter. Daughters inherit nothing from their father. Sooner or later, they leave his property to go to live with their husbands. Nevertheless, when a woman says, "my home", she is referring to her father's kraal. All her life she is, like her brothers, under her father's authority. After marriage she must also obey her husband, but her father will always have the greater authority over her. She herself is the superior of her younger sisters, of her children, and if there are any, of the inferiors, servants and serfs of her husband.

554 562 [564] The inferiority of women as women is only a special case of the general form of inferiority in Rundi society. However, both men and women have multiple roles in society. As a result, the superiority and inferiority of an individual are relative, rather than absolute, except for the *mwami* at the top of the hierarchy and the poor little Twakazi at the bottom. It has already been indicated that a social superior is sometimes inferior in the hierarchy of politics and economics. Also, the eldest brother may be the inferior of the youngest, in the likely event that the latter is chosen as the father's heritor. A Tutsikazi, the social inferior of her father and husband (provided the latter is not a Hutu), is nevertheless the superior of all the Hutu and Twa, of her children and those Tutsi who are the inferiors of her husband. Each Rundi must learn his place in relation to that of every other, calculate the distance and direction of the relationship, and find his way as well as he can through the social labyrinth.

554 557 578 [183] Despite the striking simplicity of its structure, the social hierarchy of Burundi allows for mobility and for some very complex variations in conduct. There is incontestable evidence of both constant efforts of men and women to improve their positions in society and of the associated phenomena of social instability and of fierce competition among the inferiors of a given superior. One may risk the generalization that the norms and rules dictated by the social structure will not survive a conflict with the values of wealth and power. One may say also that the greater the wealth and power of the superior, the more acute the rivalry and the more bitter the struggles among his inferiors. Thus, quarrels among Hutu, who are usually very poor, are rarely more than noisy spats quickly forgotten, while the silent hatreds of the Tutsi, born of the desire to own cows, sometimes explode in murder and fratricide. [595] Quarrels among sisters, who inherit nothing of value, are rarely as bitter or prolonged as quarrels among brothers. On the other hand,

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mother how to farm and to carry burdens on their heads. At 12, boys and girls should be able to work well and independently. If not, they are beaten or deprived of their dinner to encourage them to learn. There is, nevertheless, time to play with other children, the boys with other boys, the girls with other girls.

Moral taboos have no significance before adolescence. Children may eat anything at all, without penalty. A young girl may milk a cow: she is not yet a woman, say the Rundi, she is still like her brother. Brothers and sisters sleep together in the same bed and are covered by the same mat. If sometimes there are sexual experiments, these are not called incest. They are only children, they are not responsible, they cannot sin. At puberty, a young girl is removed from the common bedroom of the children. Boys seem to mature much later than girls. Moreover, the question of the dowry enters to delay their marriage. It is said that girls want to be married very early. By the time they have reached puberty, they have already begun to play with other young girls, each helping the other to develop the private parts to a maximum size in anticipation of the pleasures of the marriage bed. A mother warns her daughter that she must absolutely remain a virgin until her marriage, or, at least, that she does not dare to become pregnant if she has not yet been asked for and paid for. In the past, an unmarried mother-to-be would have been killed and her father's property confiscated. Today, there are illegitimate children, and nobody knows quite what to do with them. (One way in which a disgruntled wife can revenge herself upon her husband is by allowing a grown daughter to become pregnant before she is paid for.) At all events, it is up to the mother of a nubile daughter to watch her carefully.

Very strong taboos forbid all contact between a father and his daughter after she has been weaned, except for mutual greetings and for several minor services which a daughter performs for her father.[12] It is customary for girls to wear only a skirt while working, and in the past, a young girl might wear nothing at all or only a leopard skin around her hips. A father must avert his eyes if a daughter is working with her bosom exposed. If a father wishes some information about his daughter, or if he wishes to say something to her, he must ask his wife to speak to their daughter. If a young girl is to be punished, it is the mother who will beat her, never the father. The same taboos apply to the father's brothers. All are called *data*, father. Fathers never enter the house in which a married daughter lives with her husband. The explanation offered for these strong taboos to separate father from mature

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mwamikazi and a wealthy Tutsikazi are matriarchs on a much grander scale than is possible for any Hutukazi. Nevertheless, the character model and the methods for success as a matriarch are quite the same. Furthermore, although the methods employed by women are not in every detail like those of men, there is only one character model for the matriarch and the patriarch, that of the superior. By the same token, there is only one character model for those in the roles of inferiors. The latter are always alert to opportunities for asking some good thing of a superior. If one road is closed, it is necessary to find another. If a husband is not generous, a woman will ask one of her brothers for gifts, or she will wait until her sons are grown. When fortunate people have received gifts, they obviously have something to give, and they thus may expect petitioners to come to them for gifts. Yet again, if a man is muddled by drink, his wife or his vassal or someone who wants his favour will make a request of a gift in the presence of others; a promise given, drunk or sober, before witnesses must be respected at the risk of losing one's fair name. The rules of society provide only for a minimum of happiness. One must rely upon intelligence to point the way to supplementary means and to profit from every favourable circumstance.

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Like any normal citizen of Burundi, a Rundikazi desires as much power and authority as possible, which is to say, numerous inferiors, including children, workers, feudal followers; wealth, which is to say, for women who can inherit nothing, many gifts from men and from wealthier women; respect and love, which amounts to having many inferiors; elegance, which is again to say many gifts, but also education in the home of a princess; many children, which depends on the will of *Imana;* protection against one's enemies, that is, against one's rivals and one's mother-in-law; and the good luck to retain what has been received from *Imana* and from human beings, which again depends on *Imana* and also on one's own intelligence, courage and strength of character. There is decidedly no psychological conflict in women of strong character, nor is there any conflict between feminine ambitions and social norms. Everything is taken care of by the functional norms of the society.

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A woman starts very young to calculate what she needs in order to be happy. From her father she expects little more than that he will find her a husband who is wealthy and reasonable, or better yet, tractable; that he will allow her to return home if she is not satisfied with a husband and will find her a better one; that he will from time to time give her gifts. If a father has a tendency to turn

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